

# Investigation of turbulence rotation in limiter plasmas at W7-X with a new installed Poloidal Correlation Reflectometry

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## Abstract:

For the first operation phase of the optimized stellarator W7-X, a heterodyn Poloidal Correlation Reflectometry (PCR) diagnostic is installed and put into operation. The system is intended to measure the poloidal turbulence rotation and turbulence properties as de correlation time and poloidal correlation length in the plasma edge. Furthermore, it is capable to give information on the magnetic field line pitch. Therefore the system consists of an array of microwave antenna distributed in poloidal and toroidal direction. The frequency range of 22 GHz to 40 GHz allows to access local plasma densities from  $0.6 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$  to  $2.0 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$ .

During the first operation phase the turbulence rotation has been measured. In addition the radial electric field is estimated and compared to neoclassical theory. The relatively low plasma density allows to cover 80% of the plasma radius. The obtained data cover various experimental programs and are partly presented in the paper.

## 1 Introduction

For many questions on transport in fusion plasmas the knowledge of the poloidal plasma velocity ( $v_{\perp}$ ) is of outstanding importance. From the velocity profile along the radius regions of strong velocity shear can be detected. Furthermore, velocity oscillations in the plasma edge yield information on zonal flows and geodesic acoustic modes. Both phenomena are believed to interact with small scale turbulence and hamper the radial transport. An overview on both phenomena and related experiments can be found in [1] In addition these phenomena play an important role in the transition from L- to H-mode regimes. A lot of studies in the transitional phase are performed to understand the velocity shear and role of mesoscale structures [2] in the transition from L- to H-mode in stellarators [3].

These studies are based on the knowledge mean poloidal velocity and its fluctuations. Both can be accessed by a PCR diagnostic.

Under the assumption that the measured turbulence velocity has a negligible phase velocity with respect to the plasma rotation the radial electric field ( $E_r$ ) is accessible. This quantity is of high importance for theoretical models on neoclassical transport in plasmas. But, also studies of the turbulent structure itself are of interest. With the information on the turbulent modes in the frequency domain and their dependence on global plasma parameter the measured turbulent structures can be attributed to certain plasma instabilities as ion temperature gradient (ITG)- or trapped electron (TEM) modes. This experiments will be conducted in the next campaign at W7-X. Experimental information on mean quantities like ( $v_\perp, E_r$ ) and fluctuating quantities as well as the spectral distribution of turbulent structures in the frequency domain can be retrieved from poloidal correlation (PCR) diagnostics.

The paper discusses the design of a PCR diagnostic on W7-X and its commissioning in section 2. After a short introduction in the applied methodology in section 3 an overview of the first  $v_\perp$ - and  $E_r$ -measurements is given in section 4. The main achievements are summarized in section 5.

## 2 Design issues of the PCR system at W7-X

The PCR system at W7-X is thought to be operated at the interface between plasma core and edge physics [4]. It is installed in the AEA21 port. This port hosts a Doppler reflectometer and the PCR system. The PCR system is located slightly below the equatorial plane. The coordinates of the flange center are:  $R = 8.102\text{ m}$ ,  $\phi = 71.09^\circ$  and

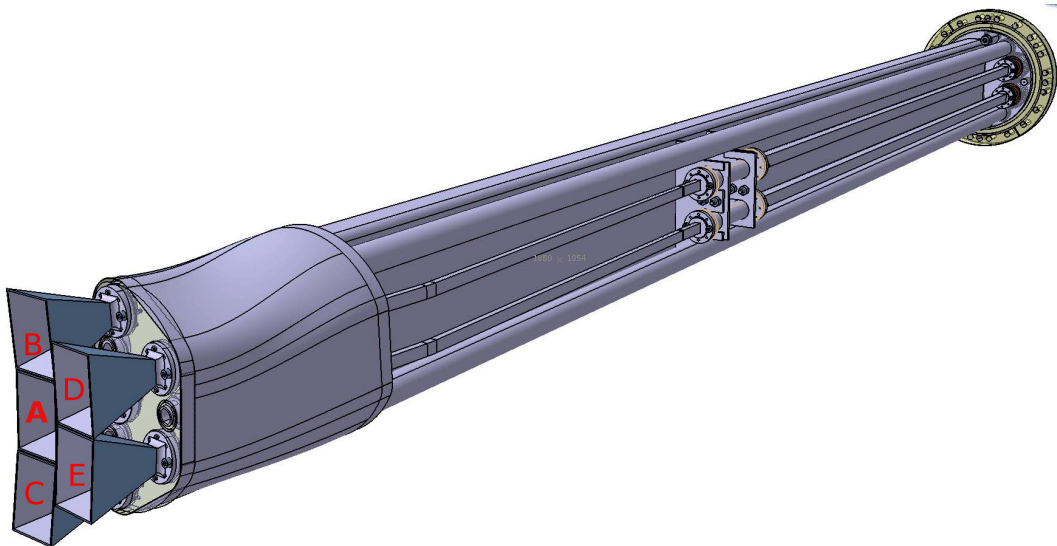


FIG. 1: Plugin of the PCR diagnostic with the notation of the receiving horns by capital letters.

$z = -0.16$  m. The system is mounted from the outside and constructed in a way that the whole plugin can be installed from the CF 150 mm without removal of the large AEA21 port. The flange hosts 5 microwave feed troughs, followed by a 1.5 m long wave guide. the wave guides are connected to a antenna (see fig 1). The antenna labelled with letters are receiving horns, the middle antenna in the first row is the launching horn (A). All five horns aim on the same focal point at  $R = 6.0$  m,  $\phi = 71.05^\circ$  and  $z = -0.104$  m. Each horn has a length of  $l = 61$  mm and the antenna opening is  $44.1$  mm  $\times$   $34.8$  mm. The antenna pattern has a 3dB width of  $14^\circ$  in the H-plane. The whole antenna array is aiming upwards and has a certain angle with respect to the normal vector of the flux surface, which is obtained from the VMEC configuration data base. For the case of geometrical optics the condition for reflection for each receiving antenna is calculated on a fine grid centred around the intersection point of the launcher with each flux surface. The grid size is 120 millimeter  $\times$  0.6 rad in  $z$ - and  $\phi$ -direction, respectively. From the scalar product the angle between the reflected beam and the connecting line to each receiver is calculated for each grid point (see fig 2 for the case of antenna AC). Note that the position for which the reflection condition is fulfilled does not necessarily coincide with the line of sight (LoS) of the antenna. In all cases the minimum angle is found for slightly larger toroidal positions and slightly above the line of sight of the antenna combination. Therefore a broad radiation pattern of the antenna is necessary.

The reflectometer itself consists of two programmable microwave synthesizer coupled by a PLL. The frequency of the two synthesizers are off by 60 MHz which is the intermediate frequency of the system. The system operates in O-mode polarization which allows to cover a range of local densities ranging from  $0.6 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$  to  $2.0 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$ . The phase fluctuations from the reflection layer of each receiving antenna are detected by a quadrature detector and sampled at 4 MHz.

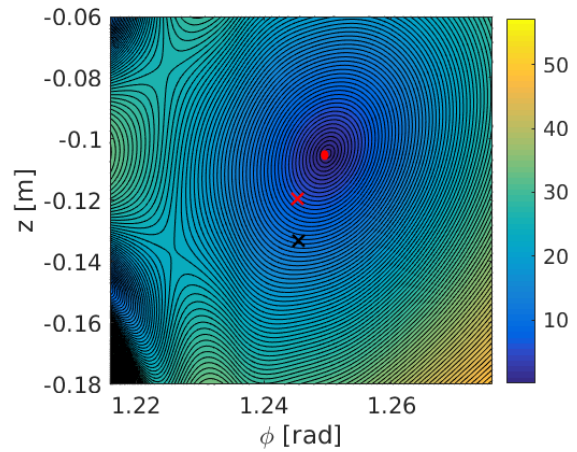


FIG. 2: Colour coded angle between reflected beam and LoS of the receiver for all grid points. Point of reflection is marked by red circle. The intersection of the launcher (red) and the receiver (black) cross is shown, too.

### 3 Methodology

After identifying the frequency range of interest from cross phase and/or coherence spectra and adequate filtering of the raw data the cross correlation function for all 6 receiver

combinations is calculated. The maximum of the cross correlation determined as:

$$\Delta t = \arg \max_t (|Y_i \star Y_j|)(t) \quad (1)$$

where  $Y_i, Y_j$  denote the time series of the fluctuations from receiver  $i$  and  $j$ . The delay time ( $\Delta t$ ) is the time it takes for a structure to propagate along the reflection layer from one receiver to the other. In fig 3 the cross correlation for all 6 combinations is shown. As expected with increasing  $\Delta t$  the cross correlation decreases. Two facts are of interest: (i) the difference in  $\Delta t$  for combinations with equal distance e.g. **BD, EC** in fig. 1 and (ii) the exponential decay of the cross correlation as function of  $\Delta t$ . The latter allows to estimate the decorrelation time of the structure (turbulence). The different  $\Delta t$  for equal  $z$  results from the inclination of the magnetic field lines in front of the antenna and allows to estimate the magnetic field line pitch [5] as:

$$\tan(\alpha) = \frac{\Delta t_{BD} \cdot z_{EC} - \Delta t_{EC} \cdot z_{BD}}{\Delta t_{EC} \cdot s_{BD} + \Delta t_{BD} \cdot s_{EC}}, \quad (2)$$

where  $s, z$  denote the toroidal distance and the separation in  $z$  direction for a given antenna combination and the subscripts in capital letters denote the used antenna configurations. The distances for all receiver combinations in  $z$ - and toroidal direction are obtained from the point of reflection of the launcher-receiver combinations. In fig. 4  $z$  distances are shown for all combinations as function of  $r_{eff}$ . For the distances and the  $\Delta t$ -values from

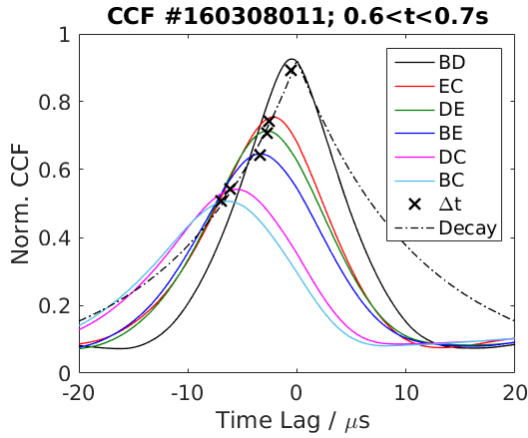


FIG. 3: The CCF as function of the time lag for all antenna combinations. Crosses denote the position of the fitted Gaussians. The dashed line describes the decay of the structure.

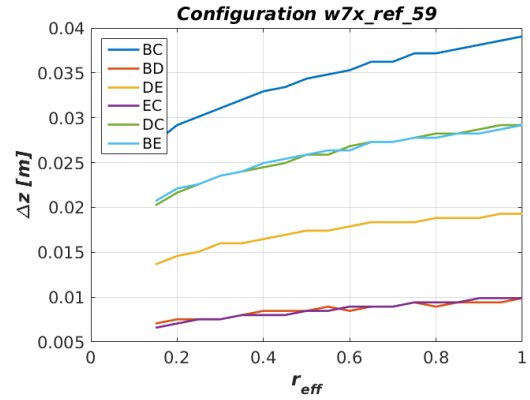


FIG. 4: Distance between the all receiver combination as function of  $r_{eff}$

all six combinations a linear approach is applied whose slope yields the turbulence rotation ( $v_{\perp}$ ). Because information on the turbulence velocity with respect to the  $E \times B$  velocity is missing, turbulence- and  $E \times B$  velocity are assumed to be equal. This is justified because the phase velocity is small compared to  $E \times B$  velocity and can be neglected. It allows to estimate the radial electric of the plasma field as:

$$E_r = v_{\perp} \cdot B_{\phi} \quad (3)$$

## 4 First velocity measurements

The system has been operated during the full OP1.1 campaign. During December 2015 and January 2016 the duration of the plasma discharge was pretty short and used for commissioning of the diagnostic. However, in February and March the discharge duration improved considerable and first systematic studies became possible. At first the direction of the rotation is investigated. With respect to the antenna array the plasma rotates from bottom to top, counter clockwise, within the last closed flux surface defined by  $a_{LCFS} = 0.49$  m. In the following the rotation profiles for different plasma scenarios are described. If not mentioned otherwise the raw data of each receiver is filtered in the range  $5 \text{ kHz} \leq f \leq 350 \text{ kHz}$ .

### 4.1 Velocity profile measurements

A series of 10 plasma discharges each with a total heating power of  $P_{ECRH} = 3.3 \text{ MW}$  for a duration of  $t = 450 \text{ ms}$  is investigated. The frequency of the reflectometer is varied on a shot to shot basis. The line averaged density from interferometer measurements (see fig. 5a) is similar for all plasmas and slightly rising, reaching at the end of the ECRH pulse  $\bar{n}_e = 2.5 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-2}$ . during the discharge the reflection layer moves towards the plasma edge as the frequency of the reflectometer is kept constant. With the density data from Thomson scattering [6], the position of the reflection layer is determined. The profile itself is approximated by  $n_e(r) = n_0 \cdot (1 - (r/a)^p)^q$ , where  $n_0$  denotes the central plasma density. The calculated  $v_\perp$  is shown in fig. 5b. The rotation profile is flat and increases slightly towards the plasma center. At the plasma edge (last closed flux surface) a transition towards positive  $v_\perp$  is obtained. The transition is abrupt and the absolute values of  $v_\perp$  in the plasma core and the edge are similar. The related  $E_r$  (see fig. 5c) yields values in the

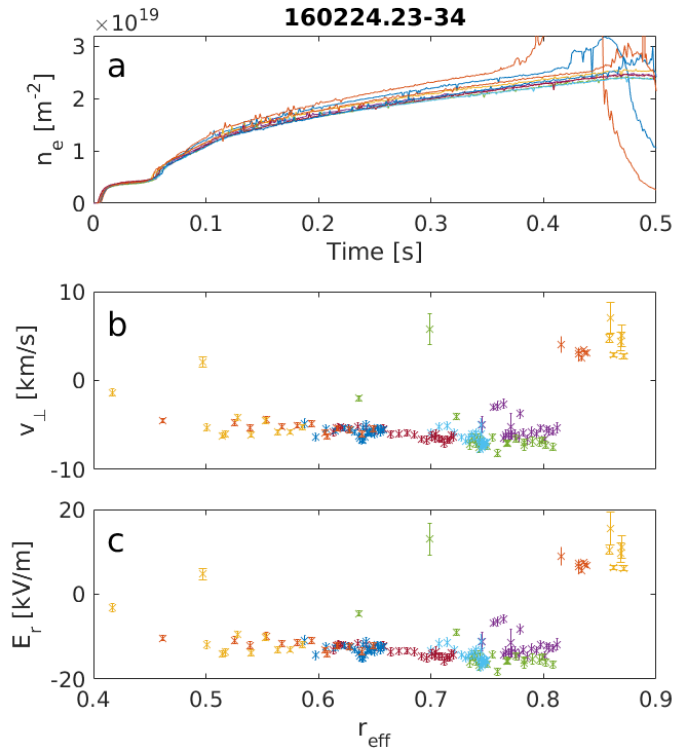


FIG. 5: Line averaged density (a) of a series of discharges. The  $v_\perp$  and related  $E_r$  as function of  $r_{eff}$ . The different colours indicate the different discharges. Note the change in sign at the plasma edge.

range  $-12 \text{ kV m}^{-1}$  to  $-17 \text{ kV m}^{-1}$  and shows a similar jump as  $v_{\perp}$  at  $r_{\text{eff}} \approx 0.4 \text{ m}$ . At the plasma edge around the last closed flux surface the estimated  $v_{\perp}$  and  $E_r$  can be compared with those values of the fast manipulator. A good agreement between both diagnostic is found which increases the confidence in both diagnostics [7].

## 4.2 Rotation in CERC plasmas

One of the main tasks within OP1.1 with its restricted set of diagnostic, was the search for core electron root confinement (CERC) regimes at W7-X. This regime is characterized by peaked electron temperature profiles and large positive radial electric field in the plasma center [8]. For plasmas with low electron density the PCR system is capable to measure deep in the plasma and should find evidence for a transition in the CERC regime. The analysed CERC discharges [9] exhibit certain densities and heating power scenarios. The ECRH power varies from 1.9 MW ( $0 \text{ s} \leq t \leq 0.4 \text{ s}$ ) to 0.6 MW ( $0.4 \text{ s} \leq t \leq 0.7 \text{ s}$ ) and jumps back again to 1.3 MW for  $0.7 \text{ s} \leq t \leq 1.0 \text{ s}$ . The PCR system is operated in a frequency scanning and a fixed frequency modus. For all CERC plasmas  $v_{\perp}$  and  $E_r$  are calculated and shown in fig. 6a,b. From neo-classic analysis a positive  $E_r$  is expected for  $r_{\text{eff}} \leq 0.4$ . The PCR diagnostic in these plasmas accesses a range  $r_{\text{eff}} \geq 0.5$ . Furthermore those measurements are performed where the density profile becomes flat and the density scale length increases. Therefore the radial resolution of the PCR increases, too. Nevertheless for  $r_{\text{eff}} \geq 0.5$  the absolute  $E_r$  is in fair agreement with measurements of a x-ray imaging crystal spectrometer as well as calculations [10]. Also the dip position in the  $E_r$  profile at  $r_{\text{eff}} \approx 0.6$  is reproduced.

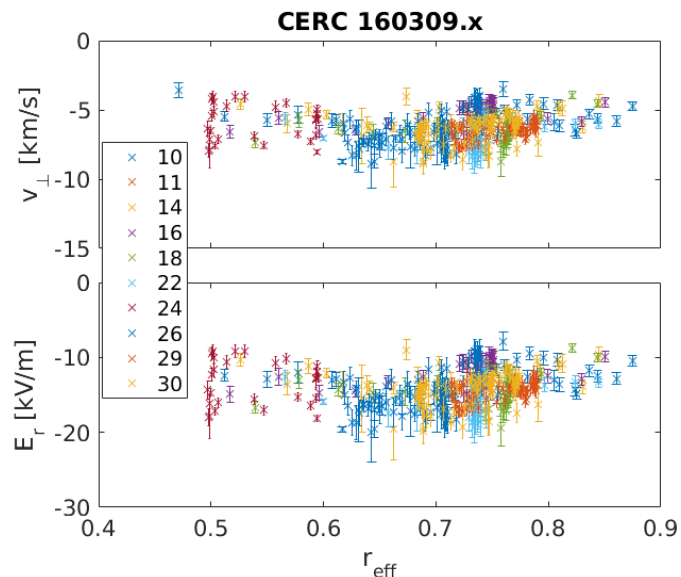


FIG. 6:  $v_{\perp}$  and  $E_r$  from the PCR system for the CERC plasmas.

## 4.3 Influence of position and power on $v_{\perp}$

For the CERC discharges discussed above the evaluation of  $v_{\perp}$  is done for the frequency range around the carrier frequency of the system of  $\pm 350 \text{ kHz}$ , only. For the combination of  $P_{\text{ECRH}} \geq 600 \text{ kW}$  and  $r_{\text{eff}} \leq 0.3 \text{ m}$  the analysis of  $v_{\perp}$  and  $E_r$  yields large error bars in the underlying  $\Delta t$  values. However, the critical density for the probing frequency is



still within the plasma. For this cases the cross phase ( $\Phi$ ) spectra is analysed in detail (see fig. 7a,c) for the showcase 160309.24 where the frequency of the reflectometer is set to 32 GHz. For the antenna combination **DE** and the time window  $0.66\text{ s} \leq t \leq 0.69\text{ s}$ , just before the jump in  $P_{ECRH}$  from 0.6 MW to 1.3 MW,  $\Phi$  is characterized by a single negative slope (red dashed line fig. 7a). The slope corresponds well to the broad peak in the coherence spectrum as indicated by vertical dashed lines in fig. 7. In the successive time window  $0.70\text{ s} \leq t \leq 0.73\text{ s}$  a drastic change in  $\Phi$  and  $\Gamma$  is observed. The central peak in  $\Gamma$  shrinks in its width. The  $\Phi$ -spectrum is now characterized by three slopes. For  $-80\text{ kHz} \leq f \leq 80\text{ kHz}$  a negative slope for  $\Phi$  is obtained. And a positive slope in  $\Phi$  is observed for  $80\text{ kHz} \leq f \leq 190\text{ kHz}$  and  $-190\text{ kHz} \leq f \leq -80\text{ kHz}$ , respectively. The positive slope corresponds to the central Gaussian in the coherence spectrum representing the propagation of the plasma column (dashed vertical lines in fig. 7c,d) and the positive slopes corresponds to an additional broad peak at  $f \approx 160\text{ kHz}$  representing a propagating turbulent structure. Note, these observations are performed on the same reflection layer and no rotation shear is involved. The measured slopes correspond directly to the velocity according

$$v_{\perp}(f) = \frac{\Delta z}{d\Phi/df} \quad (4)$$

where  $\Delta z$  denotes the distance between the antenna. The slopes in fig. 7a and those of the high frequency structure in fig. 7c are similar, yielding a similar propagation velocity. The central slope in fig. 7c has a smaller slope and therefore a higher velocity.

The observation is mainly triggered by the applied heating power. Interesting to note that the occurrence of the high frequency mode is related to the ECRH power. The coherence as well as the frequency of the structure is increasing with the  $P_{ECRH}$ . The appearance of the structure is not only observed in the CERC plasmas, but, in all plasmas where the heating power is high enough and the reflection layer is localized in the plasma center. In case of 160308.6 and  $t = 1.0\text{ s}$  with  $P_{ECRH} = 3.8\text{ MW}$  the coherence of the high frequency structure dominates the spectrum. The observation of this high frequency structure could be evidence for the transition from negative to positive  $E_r$  which is expected in the plasma center and would be in agreement with the strong power dependence as well.

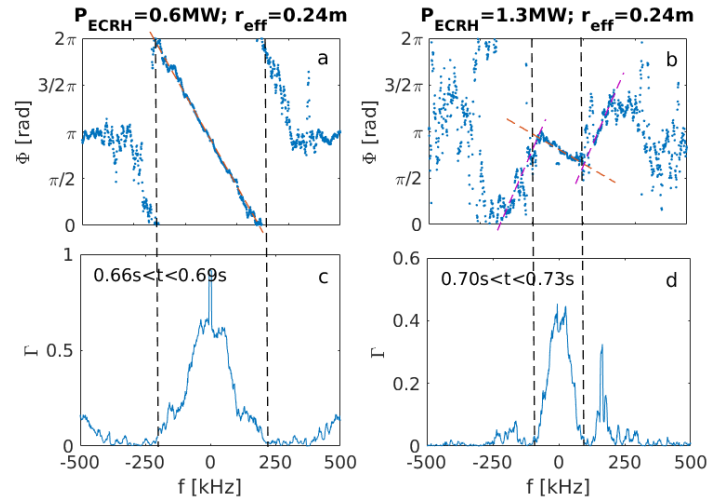


FIG. 7: Crossphase ( $\Phi$ ) and coherence  $\Gamma$  for 160309.24 for two time windows. The coloured dashed lines indicate the slopes in  $\Phi$ .

## 5 Summary and Outlook

The poloidal heterodyn correlation reflectometry is successfully installed and commissioned at W7-X. The system is capable to measure turbulence velocities and turbulence properties across a wide radial range in frequency hopping operation. Measurements of the turbulence velocity even outside the last closed flux surface are possible.

Turbulence velocities have been measured for nearly all plasmas in OP1.1. The measured velocity is in the range of  $-6 \text{ km s}^{-1}$  to  $-4 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ . Neglecting an additional phase velocity, the turbulence velocity is equal to the plasma velocity and the radial electric field can be deduce from the diagnostic. At the last closed flux surface a reversal of the velocity is observed. In the plasma center high frequency structures are observed with a positive velocity. Whereas the plasma column yields a negative velocity. This structure increases in the coherence with the applied heating power and with decreasing radius. There may be a connection to the CERC regime which expects a positive velocity and radial electric field in the plasma center.

For the next campaign the system will be upgraded with a second micro wave synthesizer to measure radial correlations, too.

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